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Boko Number

JULY 1951

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CONGO NEWS LETTER

Vol. XLII July 1951 No. 3

BOKO NUMBER

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Published Quarterly by the Missionaries of the A.B.F.M.S.

Subscription price 50 cents a year. Subscriptions may be sent to Treasurer, A.B.F.M.S., 152 Madison Ave., New York 16, N.Y. Subscription price in Congo 25 francs. Address correspondence to Editor C.N.L., A.B.F.M.S. Leopoldville II, Belgian Congo.

FOREWORD

THE STORY OF BAPTIST INTEREST IN THE BAYAKA TRIBE is a long one, but the history of Boko Mission Station among the Bayaka covers a short period of time. After many years of praying and waiting, a new mission station for the Bayaka tribe was one of the projects included in the World Mission Crusade and thirty-five thousand dollars were raised. In 1947 a site was chosen and formal application was made to the government. The process of acquiring land in a Colony is a slow one, and the right to occupy was granted as of March 1, 1949.

Boko is situated on a plateau in the midst of the Bayaka country. Through that country passes the road which runs (much of the way it creeps) east from the port of Matadi, then, in order to avoid river crossings, down to the south almost to the Angola border, and turns north again and east across the Congo. We could call it Congo Route No. 1, though it is a winding dirt road.

Boko is located on this road as it runs north, two hundred and fifty miles from Sona Bata — and those who know say that they include the longest and the most difficult miles of the road. He must rise early who would cover them in a single day. So, although Boko is a very new station, and a very much "in the bush" station, and a station still in the rough, we see cars pass almost daily and we frequently have callers. It is located just where a "house by the side of the road" is needed to give lodging to weary and dusty travelers. Missionaries and others, including some distinguished guests, have received its simple hospitality graciously, and we have been refreshed by fellowship with them.

Though work had been done in parts of the Bayaka field in the early days from Sona Bata and later from Kikongo, Boko itself is set in the midst of a group of villages that had not been evangelized. They are typical of scores of villages where the Gospel has never been preached. The name "Boko" came naturally from one of the streams of water that crosses the land. The Bayaka themselves first called it Boko, and then it became its official name. We have centered our theme around "Houses" for two reasons. It is just the way the Bayaka express it in their language. Lacking a variety of buildings themselves, they call the various

constructions of the white man "the house of this" and "the house of that." But the greater reason is that we have come to know that a work can develop only as it has buildings to meet its needs. A workman has applied for employment; where shall he live? Supplies have come; where shall we store them? We will receive another class in school; where is the classroom? We buy food for our school children; where shall we keep it? And so ad infinitum, so it seems.

If the story of Boko seems like the personal experiences of a few people, you will pardon us, but that is just about what it is. We owe a debt of gratitude to our colleagues from other stations who have given of their time and strength to help.

Many of you who read this are helping to build Boko with your prayers, as well as material help. As iron reinforcement gives strength to concrete work, so your prayers are bound into its spiritual and material structure, and you are preaching salvation to the primitive Bayaka. Missionaries may come and go, but Boko and its testimony will grow as long as there is a body of pray-ers remembering it.

BAYAKA BEGINNINGS

B. W. ARMSTRONG

A HEARTSICK disappointed missionary spent a restless night on his hard camp cot. Why had he failed? How could he touch the heart of the old heathen chief who so resolutely refused to accept a Christian teacher in his village? Morning came, a hurried breakfast, hurried packing, unhurried morning prayers, and a delegation from the chief saying he would receive the teacher. Great rejoicing, and the Morning Light broke over the Bayaka villages along the Lufini and Kwango rivers. P. A. MacDiarmid of revered memory among the Congo natives and missionaries, had another talk with old chief Kabangu of Makengu village. Kabangu was everything you could expect of a perfect old heathen: dirty, mind diseased with witchcraft, body diseased with hookworm and malaria, a whole yard full of wives, fetishes all over

the place, evil, crafty, and all in all a true product of his training and environment. Kabangu said later on that the thing that had opened his heart was the fact that when he refused to let any of the village women prepare food for the missionary or his carriers, the missionary had divided his own lunch with the Native pastor from Sona Bata who was making the preaching tour with "Pa Mac." The carriers, many of whom were church members, had spent the time in prayer while the chief talked with the missionary. Kabangu would not knowingly or willingly have given the influence of God any credit for anything, and he maintained that attitude right up to the day of his death. But an act of kindness by a white man to a black man, so contrary to all of Kabangu's experience, did touch him. God works in mysterious and varied ways to perform his wonders of grace.

Pastors from the Bakongo tribe led the work in the early days with one yearly visit from the missionaries of Sona Bata. The Bayaka themselves soon learned the rudiments of reading and became the advance guard of Christian forces working across the rivers, plains and forests from the little Lufini river east across the Kwango, Lonzo, Yungu, Wamba and Bakari rivers. Village after village was occupied, the annual visit of the missionary became a time of great rejoicing and of huge gatherings. The catechumens were examined and those judged worthy were baptised. New churches were organised as the work spread. All through the years 1920–1930 this continued. When Kikongo station was established on the Wamba river, the Bayaka were not at all satisfied that it was located to the north of their own territory among the Bahumbu and Bambala tribes. But for some years they continued to come to Kikongo for big meetings, to send their children to the central school there, and to receive visits from the missionaries of Kikongo. But the real enthusiasm was beginning to die. They wanted a mission located in their own territory and missionaries giving time to the work of the Bayaka villages. This very thing had long been a mission project, but it takes money and missionaries to build a station.

In the years 1930–40 the work among the Bayaka developed mostly in the field of indigenous leadership. Some of the brightest boys that attended the Kikongo central school were Bayaka, and

some of these went on to higher training at Kimpese and at the Sona Bata medical school. But when these men returned, they had to meet the competition of established older men from the Sona Bata field, and the even more serious threat of jealousy from among their own Bayaka brethren. Only a few of them were able to stand up to this. Another contributing factor was the very low pay in comparison with graduates from the same schools in other missions. The most serious of all handicaps was the lack of supervision from missionaries during this time of change from outside to local leadership. There was still a ready response to Gospel preaching, there was a real awareness of the value of training and education, there was keen appreciation of the medical service of the mission. But the sad story is one of lack of leadership and lack of supervision to solidify the gains made, and to prepare the local churches for the next step which should have been full self support as well as self propagation and government.

Rather large numbers were baptised during these years and self support was accepted in principle. It simply meant that the church workers were not receiving an adequate salary. But the Bayaka continued to reach out to new territory, even when the sending church was too weak to support the outreach. During the years 1940–45 there was a subversive movement which weakened the strongest local church and caused a further loss in trained leadership.

One of the old Sona Bata pastors was conducting a communion service in a Bayaka church. It had been a big church once, with the communicants numbering in the hundreds. This day there were 17 of us present. The old pastor used a Kikongo parable: "The wild pigeons fly all around the country during the day, but they come home to roost in the Fumu tree." Then he went on to say that of course those who get shot, or get caught by hawks, or get into traps do not come back, only those who live. So the Bayaka who live will come back, but it is sad to think of so many of them dying while wandering apart from God. Pray with us and work with us that the wandering Bayaka may have those who will lead them back to the Fumu tree.

WE SAW IN A VISION—HOUSES

JEAN MATANDA

(*As told and written by John Matanda — evangelist at Boko.*)

FOR many years we Bayakas waited and prayed to God the Father for a Mission Station. Some of us, when we were children, went to school at Sona Bata for a little while. We grew up and were married and had children, but still we had no mission station. Some went to Kikongo to school, but it took many days to walk to Sona Bata and many days to walk to Kikongo, and the missionaries could not come often to visit us and to show us the way of God. We were sad because the Bayakas did not have the message of the Gospel. We were sad and thought our brothers in the white man's country had forgotten us.

Then one day word came from Tata Armstrong, "Matanda, you folks look for a site for a mission station. We are coming to find one." The missionaries came and we showed them the site we had found. They looked at others but finally chose Boko. Then Tata and Mama Robbins were chosen to come to Boko, but they had to stay at Kikongo until permission came to build Boko. Tata Robbins came to Kasindji in June 1947 with Tata Smith and we baptized five people. In January Tata and Mama Robbins came for the first time with their three children, and we saw our missionaries. The people came in from the churches and we had a happy meeting. Sunday afternoon Tata Robbins took in his truck those of us who were elders in the church to the Boko site. There with Tata and Mama Robbins we talked about the buildings that would be at Boko. We prayed together that God would bless Boko. We were very happy. I was teacher-evangelist at Kasindji, but they told me to go with my pupils and start the Regional School at Boko.

We have been very happy since our missionaries came to us, and we thank God very, very much for sending them. But we need more missionaries to do all the work there is to do. We thank God for our Mission Station. We thank God the Father for sending us our missionaries. If a person is without Father and Mother, he cannot be happy, but now we are happy, and we have been from that time to this.

The House That Was Built In Two Days

HELEN R. ROBBINS

WHEN it seemed that we were to be the ones to open the new Bayaka station, our friends in America asked us, "How do you open a new mission station? What do you do first?" We didn't know the answer, so when we came back to the field from furlough, we asked more experienced colleagues, "What do you do first?" But there seemed to be no formula, nor book of directions. It seems you just begin as the Spirit of God directs in the circumstances that present themselves. And we have found it so, that He is there and ready to point out the next step. And so it came about that we began with the house that was built in two days!

We had been on the field a year and were still waiting for the permit which would authorize us to occupy the requested site. In the meantime, we must not put up a stick, nor plant a tree on it. But we did have a site for a secondary post on the edge of what was to be the Mission proper. Such a site has only Congolese in residence and, since it is not owned by the Mission, local authorities can grant permission without delay. The white man can spend time there in supervision of the work.

Plans had been made for a three weeks' Bible School to be held on this site in August. In June, Bill himself had erected the main timbers of a building that was to serve as shelter for us during the three weeks. Christians from the Bayaka church had agreed to finish the building — thatching the roof and walls and pounding dirt for a floor. The agreement had been made, but we expected almost anything — or nothing — from this first project left to the Bayaka church to undertake.

At two o'clock one day our little truck turned off the road just beyond the bundle-of-wood hunter's fetish, and bumped over the grassland to the appointed place. Along the road we had seen promise of big events. Groups of young men with bundles on their heads were hurrying along and shouted a greeting as we passed. Scores of women with large baskets of dry cassava root were trudging Boko-ward at the call of the local stateman to bring us a market.

We were met at the site by a group of disconcerted folk. The building had not been touched! Not one stick had been tied in place, not one bundle of thatch brought in from the plain! Not the most rudimentary of accommodations had been provided for themselves or for us, just a wide open plateau, and here we were with our two little sons and another truck following with three fellow missionaries who were to be with us a few days! The members of the committee were shamefaced and ready to accuse one another and start a big quarrel (which the Bayaka do enjoy). Each one had been willing to help, but there had been no one to take the lead and how often we have found that true during these past months. The sheep are here, but they are all sheep — no shepherds.

We drove on and set up camp in a little government transient house a few kilometers away. We gave them just two days to provide us a shelter, but even then it took the leadership of the missionary to get them together to do what they were quite willing to do and what they did enthusiastically. Like guilty children they went to work and in two days the heavier timbers were in place and bound together with slender poles, which form the framework of the roof and walls. To this, thatch had been tied with forest string — and we moved in — the growing grass proving a cleaner floor than the bare ground. The house that was built in two days had been erected with nothing more than two simple tools, the axe and the matchet. Not a plane, nor a saw, nor a hammer, nor a nail had been used. True the walls were not straight, nor did they promise much endurance, and when an out-of-season unexpected rain fell the roof proved to be a sieve, and at midnight we were looking for dry spots for our cots and those of our children.

But always we shall remember this house, the beginning of houses at Boko. In the next few weeks it became the "seat" of the Bible Institute which marked the first functioning of Boko as a mission station.

As for those in attendance, there was a tent and soon another little house, but they preferred, it being dry season, to sleep on the edge of the forest. Under the trees they spread their mats; between the mats little fires glowed through the night. Three small clearings in the woods became classrooms with logs for seats, and one was the first Boko chapel. During those weeks of Insti-

tute other buildings went up, two thatch dormitories, a little house for teachers and a three-room pastor's house — all built of thatch and sticks. Since the pastor was lacking, the missionary and family occupied it on his monthly visits during the next year. It was similar to the first house, but straighter and sturdier, and the roof didn't leak. The first building became temporary classroom for the thirty-six boys who gathered for school, but when the season of hard storms began, it was soon blown down and had to be replaced.

Each month during the next year we spent a week or more with our people, hoping each month would be the one when we could begin building on the mission site. Living in our thatched house very simply, right in their midst we and the little group grew very close together. When the rain poured and ran under their walls, it ran under ours, too. When the wind blew it came through our grass walls, as it did theirs, and we brought a bit of fire into the house to keep warm as they did. When driver ants invaded, our home was as vulnerable as theirs. Our meals, too, were cooked over an open fire. When they were sick we were right at hand to help, and when Samuel and his wife quarreled and the dispute began to be violent, we were within earshot and soon brought peace between them. We all took pride together in every bit of progress and in our plans for the future. One could not continue living in a home like that and carry on the strenuous program of a mission station, nor would we wish to return to those days of living in that drab abode, but the memory of them is glorified by the experiences we had of His presence, and of His coming as the Light of Life into Bayaka hearts.

It was in the open-air woodland chapel that communion was first served at Boko, and the first two baptized were received into church fellowship. It was there that Dr. and Mrs. Jesse Wilson brought to our people the inspiration of their messages. It was in that very primitive home that they were our gracious guests.

In that first chapel-in-the woods, we gathered for the first World Day of prayer. There were present one church member and two converts. The other women wouldn't have come, except that it happened to be market day, and they came to show friendliness and out of curiosity, because the time of the meeting was

just as soon as market produce was purchased. They came running down to the woods, gaily laughing over the novel idea of any kind of a meeting "for women only." Forty of them sat on the log pews as if ready to rush out again if anything didn't please them. There was no hymn we could sing; while I tried to talk several kept interrupting, making comments to their comrades; and when we prayed no eye was closed and no head bowed. Only the three had any idea what it was all about. But — it was the most impressive meeting of the Day of Prayer I have ever attended, but the impression was that of the terrific need of the Holy Spirit to bring Light into darkened hearts that they might understand the Great Salvation that was offered them. And in my heart I was crying out to God, "Oh, God, the women of America ARE praying for these Bayaka women today, aren't they? The women of Maine, and New Jersey, and Iowa and California! Without their prayers we can never win these to Christ for whom He also died." That evening with the three that understood, we had a real prayer service. They said, "Mama, did you know that the women didn't understand at all." "Yes," I answered, "but they were interested and they will come again. That is enough to expect this first time. It will be the Holy Spirit Who will bring the knowledge of Christ into their hearts."

The ground underfoot and grass continually powdering dust from above scarcely recommend themselves for an operating room, but shortly before it blew down, in the house-that-was-built-in-two days was performed some of the most important surgery that will ever be performed at Boko. Dr. Philip Austin made it possible for forty-four happy boys to avoid the degenerating results of the Bayaka initiation camp which has been obligatory for all Bayaka boys. It opened a gateway through which many young lads are passing, encouraged by government medical service as well as the mission, to the possibility of stronger manhood and cleaner character.

A volume of tales could be written of beginnings which centered in that group of humble structures. Later, when we began to build on the permanent site, some of the dormitories and homes for workmen remained at this first place and we needed a name for it; so the place of beginnings is now called "Alpha" and the

next group of buildings "Beta". Ground has also been broken at "Gamma", and we pray that Boko will grow until He Who is its ALPHA and OMEGA shall gather the fruits of its ministry into His everlasting kingdom.

THE HOUSEWARMING

Helen R. Robbins

THE grant to the mission site came — but, at first, with permission to build only temporary buildings. The first building began to go up. Planned originally as a large workshop, it later was adapted to serve as workshop at one end, and a house at the other. By Easter the framework was up and most of the thatched roof on, and Easter services were held under its shade. Then the walls built of ant hills, cement floors in two or three rooms and the family feels it can move in, for work is retarded until we can actually live at Boko. Late in July, shortly before Priscilla must leave to return to school in the Kasai, we change our residence. Last minute sewing is done on school wardrobe, while Daddy suffers and sweats over the cement floor in the next. Conference at Léopoldville took a big share of August, but early in September most of our belongings had come from Kikongo, and supplies from Léopoldville.

The house was not exactly finished. Walls were still in the rough, ceilings were not in, one or two doors were hung and the most necessary of the window shutters. One end of the building was home, the other end carpenter shop. And it all arrived at once — our own furniture, grocery supplies, White Cross we had been saving up for the big move, cases of school books and supplies, slates, bales of cloth, bags of coarse salt and dried fish, tools, tons of cement, roofing, medical supplies, drums of gasoline and kerosene, motor oil, kegs of nails, stove pipe, children's toys. Please, stop, even the house is overflowing, and no carpenter could find room to plane a board in all that mess of stuff — all so necessary, yes, so very necessary that we MUST find storage place somewhere for it all!

September marked the official opening of Boko, as far as our native church was concerned. Some of our evangelists had done their blundering best to help lay cement. School boys had happily consented to only one month's vacation in order to be able to get the house ready for occupancy. Their efforts and loyalty had gone into it, and to them it was a wonderful house. We wanted to share with them the joy of our coming "home" and tried to plan a housewarming. But whom could we include? Not all of them, for the house could not hold them all. Some had contributed very little, and some not at all. If we included some younger ones and omitted some elders, worse than hurt feelings would result. We must include, too, some who came in from the district. We just couldn't work it out, but were keenly disappointed for we felt we were missing an opportunity in letting our people know that we were here for their sakes.

Then communion Sunday came. Groups came in from the outposts. A second chapel-in-the-woods, this one at Beta, had been prepared. (We had grown so fond of chapels-in-the-woods that we almost regretted having to move into a chapel). There was joy among the believers. The preaching service was over and all but the church members dispersed. We were making ready for communion. The camp table was set up under the trees and the communion service laid. But clouds had been gathering and drops began to fall faster and faster. We must postpone communion or go under cover. There was only one place—our living-dining room. Table and all were picked up quickly carried, with church members following. They were not a large group—forty at the time. There were no pews, not even logs, but the floor served as seats.

At first the interest was distracted by curiosity in the new home, then all centered their thoughts on the "rememberance of our Lord." It was a blessed time and we felt very close together as we shared this sacred supper in our new home. Then it all became clear to us and we knew that this was better than all other housewarmings, one that we would not have presumed to plan as such, but one that blest our home as no other. At its close we reverently told our brothers and sisters in Christ what we have written here; how we tried to plan and couldn't, but how great was our joy that

our home should be initiated by such blessed fellowship in such a sacred name. And they understood, for as we meet around the Lord's table, it is the time more than any other, when the barriers of race, of standards of living, of education and of culture fall away and we are as one before Him and in His sight.

We have partaken of communion in great churches and in splendid surroundings, but it holds a special significance when shared with some of the humblest of the earth. For it seems to us we think of our Lord enduring the cross "for the joy that was set before Him," that as He looked down through the ages he may have passed quickly over some of the great of the earth, but that He may have seen His joy come to fullest fruition in Bayakas and other like them, so primitive, so uncouth, so destitute of worldly goods and knowledge, so unlovely and unloving, become sons and daughters of the living God, and worthy to enter with Him into the Kingdom of His Father.

And that first Sunday in September 1949 our home was dedicated to that purpose.

THE HOUSE OF BOOKS

EVA SHEPARD

THIS is the name the school was called when it was first opened here at Boko. We just kept on using it. Its beginning was very unpretentious. A regional school, thirty pupils, two teachers teaching first and second year. Since then it has grown and grown. In 1949 (when the Robbins came to live at BOKO) the attendance increased to fifty. That meant another teacher, another classroom and more advanced work. With Mrs. Robbins to supervise and do some of the teaching they offered third and fourth year of primary school. Under the close supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Robbins the village and regional schools were rapidly improving. Some teachers brought in lads that knew how to read.

After months of anticipation Miss Benner arrived to help with the school. She came just in time to prepare and give the final examinations. Being Phyllis, in spite of only fiv e weeks of school and examinations she won the lads hearts. How disappointed the

teachers and lads were when she was reappointed to Leo, rather than coming back to Boko.

By September 1950 the enrollment reached a total of ninety students. Another classroom was needed. The almost new sheep house was requisitioned. New sand was carried for the floors, benches and desks built of sticks and slabs of wood, new windows and window frames and even a nice large new blackboard. It now provides a clean, cool, and neat classroom. Of course with more boys we asked two more teachers to come and help.

Time passed quickly. By January 1951 two new regional schools had been opened and the teachers in the village schools were improving. We were proud and happy to accept only those who had fully completed the second year of primary school. The others now had regional schools to attend and were sent back to them. It was a real advancement.

Each time that new students were accepted there was always a large group of boys too old for regional school and too old to plan on five years of schooling. They wanted to learn to read. To be of mutual help we offered one year course of training for village teachers. We needed teachers, they wished to learn to read. A group of twelve accepted and the course was begun. Many of the "eager" students only wanted to come so that they would be exempt from taxes and from state work. Soon those with that desire found the afternoon work period too tedious and left. A small percentage were really sincere and stuck it through for a whole year learning to read and learning more and more about Christ and His will for their lives. We tried various methods to help them learn quickly. Finally in October 1950 we obtained copies of Laubach's reading lessons in Kikongo. It was a joy to see how easily and happily these big awkward fellows learned to read. Some in six weeks, some in eight weeks. It meant so much to them that we started using it in the district and also with the older girls and women. Dr. Laubach has been so greatly used to bring the light of reading to many, many thousands in other lands. We are only beginning here in Congo now. We have great faith that many thousands of our Congo folk shall profit spiritually and intellectually from his great contribution.

One class of the school is out doing emergency teaching. They are filling in for a year until more teachers are trained and until the

older ones revive. They seemed so young and inexperienced we hesitated about sending them. But the villages needed teachers right then, we sent the lads, by faith. So far only one lad has failed. The others have done a good work.

Mateka and Ilenda (two of our emergency teachers) have a splendid regional school at a big center. The village lads are eager to attend for the teachers have such good spirits and enthusiasm. Some of the older teachers have lost their vision and need these younger lads to awaken them again. The Lord is blessing their work in the villages. When they come back to school we trust that they will be eager to learn all that they can and will continue to be a blessing.

Our reason for having the "House of Books" is to develop Christian character and train Christian leaders to teach their own people God's way of salvation through Christ. Satan has ruled in these people's lives for generations, only the power of God's Light can help them discern the truth. They seem so blinded by lies and deception of all sorts it is most difficult for them to learn to be honest and speak truthfully.

We have found that the work period, from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. is the most effective way of teaching honesty of speech and action and obedience. The climate is against work, village habits are against work (unless done just when you feel like it) and the human body rebels against these unusual tasks. In a way I marvel that the boys adjust so easily to the change with as few tantrums and walkouts as we have during a year. How good it is to see them developing these habits that will help them all their lives to earn a good living for their families and to have better homes to live in while doing it.

Diakwampa and Mafunda, two of the older lads fitted in rather quickly. They worked so well that Bill took them on as "boy masons" in the afternoon. They were so proud of their jobs, that when Bill asked them to do some other work for one day they refused. Worst of all they kept on refusing. One day they just went off to their village. The Lord was still keeping them. He used a Belgian State official to send them back to school. Because the State man sent them back they did not "lose face"—well not too much. Diakwampa was steady for a long time. Then off he ran to his village. This time it was a Christian woman who talked with him.

During the night he read his Bible. He had a real conversion. He came back with a heart and mind ready and willing to learn and to serve. The Lord has often used him to witness to other lads who are tempted to quit. Through him many and many a lad has been saved for the Lord's work.

It is a growing time too for the teachers. None of them has had any course in pedagogy and only two or three years teaching experience, and three of them only a few months experience. One of them has special trouble. He finds it hard to rule his temper and his tongue. The boys know it, they seem to rejoice when he loses control of himself. The poor lads don't learn too much for he cannot control them. Therefore our teachers' meetings are short pep talks on pedagogy, child psychology and practical Christian living. They are sincere and earnest and anxious to do their best. Because of their good spirits they are doing a remarkable job of teaching even though so poorly trained.

It is a real challenge to be working here where so much is ahead of us. We humbly pray that the Lord will help us together to have the patience and the wisdom to build a firm foundation on which shall be built a Christ-centered school whose graduates shall have the vision of teaching their own people the joy of living for Christ.

THE HOUSE OF MEDICINE or

(To Be Taken Only on Prescription of a Doctor.)

THE first order of drugs had come. We had just returned from Conference and Conference had done its best to place a nurse at Boko, but anyone could see that no nurse could be taken from her work, and there were none to spare. So it was *we* who pulled from the packing the bottles and packages bearing the formidable prescription "To be taken only on prescription of a doctor." Even after many years of missionary work and in close fellowship with our medical colleagues, medical work still seemed to us a something verging on the supernatural and altogether out of the realm of ordinary folk. And all the more so, for we are not one of those courageous souls who, though not medically trained, can watch an

operation or observe a bad accident case with composure. We kept as far away from that sort of thing as we could. But here it was, and it was *we* who were unpacking medicines "to be taken only on prescription of a doctor" and it was *we* who were to administer them.

Very early in our contact with the Bayaka work we had realized that much would be expected of us. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Armstrong who had previously itinerated in the area were of that braver sort who could meet all emergencies, and with that precedent I, of course, was expected to do the same.

The first shock of that realization came on our second trip into the Bayaka country when over a rough and almost impassable road we reached an isolated church post. The local pastor came before we got out of the truck. "Mama, we are so glad you have come, 'he said. "There is a woman in the village who has been in labor two days, and we can't help her. It will be allright now that you have come." Right then, I could have wished I was far away. There was too much at stake — a woman's life, that of her child — and even bigger than that, the confidence of the people in the ministry of the new mission that was to be among them and its opportunity to help others. Perhaps our presence brought needed confidence, helped by the stimulation of the tea we gave because we were expected to administer something, but otherwise we were not responsible for the happy outcome except for the prayers we offered. But the happy mother with her husky baby boy and her whole clan gave the credit to us, and through us to the power of Him Whom we preach, and His testimony was sustained.

During the months before a trained Native assistant came to help us, we hesitated each morning before we stepped outside the door, and offered a brief but fervent prayer for what might be waiting for us there—a baby who had fallen into the fire during the night (or worse yet, two nights before), a well-advanced case of pneumonia, a child who had become a pitiful skeleton because of undernourishmnent and parasites.

We understand more than ever now why the Lord healed when He lived among men and how it drew folks to Him. We understand it when a mother and father stand at our door, hope striving with despair in their hearts and faces, waiting for us to

say we can help the child. We have learned that when our hearts fail us and we have no courage, we must give confidence and courage to those who look to us. We have learned, too, that the things we never thought we could do, we can when we depend upon the Great Healer. There have been instances when the call has come to an urgent case, when we have left our bicycle behind. It would have taken us to the dispensary too soon; we needed the time it took us to walk there to gain the courage for what we might find.

A mission doctor presented us with a " Quick Reference Book of Medicine," one of those ponderous volumes of some fourteen hundred pages. Very soon we sent an S. O. S. to the donor. Please follow with a medical dictionary. Fortunately, we do have a Webster's to help elucidate the medical dictionary. To complicate matters even more, many of the drugs come under French labels. How relieved we are when we find what we need, and the formula works!

In January '50, Dorothy Wiseman, R. N. of Vanga, spent five weeks at Boko to organize the work of our little dispensary. Our first Native *aide-infirmier* came at the same time and relieved us of much of the detail, if not of the responsibility. There was no building for the dispensary—but it opened in a little tool shop, six by six, with a veranda roof put up quickly with sticks from the forest and aluminum roofing. Here for six months the sick were treated, babies were born and simple laboratory work was carried on, and it was demonstrated that science and prayer could do far more than native festishes and potions of the medicine man.

We called it only a dispensary, but from the very beginning there were in-patients. Where to put them? The first ward was a tiny two-bed tent, and one of the first patients the only chief in the vicinity who had not welcomed the coming of the Mission. Cured of pneumonia, he has been a friend ever since. At that time, too, came Lukanga, a little boy perhaps eight years old, very ill. He came all alone, an orphan, he said, and no one was interested enough to come with him. He is still with us, one of our special children, and a sweet boy, who knows Boko as his only home.

Very soon the tent overflowed, and it was also being eaten by termites. It must be replaced. Roland, son of missionary Gittings

of Vanga, came to our help. Spending some weeks at Boko among other evidences of his work, he left what we like to call the "Roland Gittings ward" —four tiny thatched rooms that we thought in an emergency might house eight patients, but have several times held twelve or thirteen. Perhaps you wouldn't consider it an honor to have an unsightly grass structure named in your honor. Roland has seen and understands that his has been a real honor in building the first ward at Boko. The beauty it lacks in appearence is more than compensated by the beauty of the Lord that has been revealed to those who have glimpsed it for the first time. In July we proudly moved the dispensary into the very first of the permanent cement block buildings at Boko, but the little ward still houses those who stay for treatment.

The most prevalent disease and most fatal among the Bayaka is malnutrition. All Bayakas are undernourished, but some starve to death in a land of eternal summer, where the soil is productive, the climate favorable and land plenty and to spare. Ignorance, superstition, lethargy and an unwillingness to try new foods are the chief reasons. Indifference to orphans and the chronically sick bring tragic cases that haunt one's sleep at night. Ndundu was over three years old and weighed twelve pounds when she came to us. She is a well, happy girl now. A nineteen year old girl weighed only thirty-five pounds, though she was normal height for her age. She was beyond help. Some children we have been unable to help, because the relatives considered us cruel when we tried to force them to eat. They wanted us to give them an injection or two and call it a cure. Many of them cannot persevere through the long slow road back to health.

Bayaka religion consists chiefly in finding the fetish that will ward off disaster, sickness and death, and no religion will hold meaning for them at present, that does not offer healing for the body. And because that is so, and the reputation of Boko was at stake and with it the reputation of Boko's Lord, we have felt the Father very gracious that for the first months we were able to help all who came, and some of them were very sick. The time came when there were some we could not save, but by that time the people had confidence and it did not keep them away.

In one year we have treated over three thousand dispensary

cases and almost three hundred in-patients and we have an average weekly attendance of over forty at our baby clinic. These are not imposing statistics, but the growing numbers alarm us and at the same time challenge us to prayer and to hope that before long the much needed missionary nurse will come to give professional care and full time service that the need of the Bayaka people demands. With Paul we are debtors—debtors in so many ways. We are debtors to the Bayakas to share with them the benefits of the medical knowledge that has become our inheritance, that takes away the belief in witchcraft and points the way to the One Who is Life Eternal. And we are not really doing it until the school-marm can go back to the classroom and a bona fide medical missionary takes charge in the dispensary.

BUILDING AT BOKO

W. F. Robbins

BUILDING to me is such a new experience that I wish there were someone else to write the article on this subject. What I have in building knowledge has been gained here at Boko. I cannot claim to have built anything great or artistic. I do hope that what I have done is usable. I can say that in all of my experience in Christian work, in teaching of unintelligent people, no profound problems of mission work and, in fact, no work, mental or physical has been more of a burden or has wearied me more than this building work at Boko.

Helen has already referred to building number one. When we arrived here with our children, some two and a half years ago, we found the same and only the same frame-work which my cook and I had put up some weeks previous. The members of the Native Church among the Bayakas did not seem to have physical or spiritual desire sufficient to build a house for their missionaries even when they were to be paid for their work. However, they had vouched with earnest voices that they did want the missionaries.

When, that day which now seems so long ago, I told them that unless they went to work and gave us a helping hand in the building program, we would go back to Kikongo, they went to

work with a will. From the valleys came the larger sticks and trees used for frame work. From the same forested valleys came string and thatching materials. From the higher grasslands on the plateau came an abundance of thatch-grass. Song shouting and good nature were in evidence everywhere. Could all of the houses at Boko have been built out of sticks, thatch and string the building of Boko would have been finished long ago. But houses through which the rains beat, the winds blow and the flies and mosquitoes have access are not quite the best for the health of missionaries and their children. This is, however, the kind of house used by the people of this area. They do know how to build such a house and build it quickly. The walls may be as crooked as the profoundest imagination desires. The roofs may have valleys which permit the gathering of rain-water and consequently the drenching of the room and whatever is in the room below. The roof on one side may be longer and wider than that on the other side. All this makes not the slightest of difference so long as the owner is satisfied and since he himself is the architect it behooves him to be satisfied. Whatever else we may say of the colored man here at Boko, it can generally be said that "He is not particular."

The building of the second and simultaneously two other houses here at Boko was directed by two Vanga pastors. These were much firmer and one of them offered us shelter, whenever we were here at Boko, for the better part of a year. This house is still standing and is at present being employed as a dormitory for the school boys.

Once the teachers and students were reasonably housed at Alpha we began to build here at Beta which is about a half a mile from Alpha. A large workshop was envisioned. It was to be built out of sticks and thatch and it was to be used only as a shop. But when months dragged by and we continued to have only a temporary permit to build, we decided to make the shop our home. We are still living in that shop. A portion of it has been partitioned off for our living quarters. Planing and sawing goes on in one end while we try to live the normal life of a natural family in the other end. We put in cement floors all through. From large ant hills, found in the nearby forest, we found enough clay substance to put up wind and rain-proof walls. There is no regular clay to be found in or near

Boko. In this home of ours we have a large living-dining room, two bedrooms and a tiny bedroom, a small bathroom and my tiny office. Everything is crude but we are not uncomfortable.

It was in the construction of this house that we ran into the first real difficulties. The difficulty was not all in the building but in the getting of materials with which to build. So longas we worked with grass, sticks and thatch we had plenty of experienced help. But when we began using clay from ant-hills, and rock and sand, our colored helpers were all at sea.

Large two-man baskets were created. By attaching a pole across the top of the basket and letting it extend beyond the ends some three feet, two men could easily lift a good load to their shoulder and walk off with it. Such baskets are used in many parts of Congo. But the Bayakas had never had any experience with such large baskets. Actually, they are not large but about the size of a small case of milk. But they did not like the basket, nor the load that could be put into it. At the end of the first day, I checked the work and found a group of some sixteen proud, beaming faces, and in front of each was a small pile of about three pecks of ant-hill clay! That was a full day's work! They had not used the large baskets, but had made some of their own, that would hold about two or three quarts each. All day long each man had trudged back and forth, to and fro from the forest, each with one of these tiny baskets on his head. According to their understanding, they had done a full day's work and were worthy of a full day's pay. I shall not go into details to show how difficult it has been to change that idea that small baskets only can be used for carrying materials for building.

Our next difficulty was the gathering of sand, rock, and gravel for the cement work. I gave each two men a shovel, a hoe and a basket. I sent them down to a small stream near by where there was an abundance of sand, rock and gravel. The Native evangelist was to oversee the work, as I had to return to Kikongo for added provisions. When I came back the second afternoon, I found surprisingly small piles of sand, rock and gravel. I went down to the stream where they were getting the materials. They were using neither hoe nor shovel and had continued with their tiny baskets. There they were, in the center of the stream, digging sand and rock with

their hands! The pebbles they washed one by one and threw them into one of the larger baskets. Cement floors! I began to feel that it would be a l-o-n-g time before we would ever have them! The roof and walls of the shop were not difficult to build. It was done with two tools, a hammer and a saw. Some would say, "It looks it!" Perhaps they are right. The walls are reasonably smooth, but they are not true by level. The carpentry could well be described with the well-known words, "fearful and wonderful." Having had no experience in carpentry, I found it really difficult. I tried to get the colored people to help. Willingly they would begin to split a board. When the saw had entered the board for about six inches, it would bind and stick. The movements of the sawer would get slower and slower until, with his face covered with perspiration, he would turn to me and say, "Tata, I can't do it!" And I, with all my inexperience was the best man with the splitting saw. No one has challenged my championship. I still am the best man at splitting boards at Boko. But I have two young men who are beginning to split boards, too, and they will catch up with me one of these days. When they do, I shall be a happy man!

The driving of a nail its full length into any piece of timber was also a difficult accomplishment for them. It is true that much of the Congo wood is hard. Inevitably they would turn to me with, "Tata, we can't do it," so "Tata" had to do it himself.

Our first experience at cement work came when we put in the floor of what is now the bathroom. At half past six one morning we began mixing rock and cement. "Certainly," we thought, "with a whole day before us we shall have enough time and to spare to finish this little place." However, the work did not progress with any speed at all. Our men did not know how to use a shovel. They pushed and they pulled that mixture until their faces were wreathed with perspiration and they were panting for breath, but the cement was not well mixed. A shovel may be an easy tool to handle if you know how, but I have seen men in misery because they had never used the tool before. Again and again I showed them. Many, many times people overheard me say, "It is this way, see? This is the way to do it." But they could not do it. Those nights I went to bed aching from head to foot from having tried to do everything myself in one day. I despaired of ever being able to teach them.

Then the first batch was mixed and we began to run it in. This should have been easy. But it wasn't easy for any of us. It was my firstexperience. My men knew nothing about it, whatever. We tried for an even surface, but when we were through, we had a surface of hills and valleys that would have given pleasure to a minute roller coaster. The more we tried to smooth out that floor, the greater seemed the hills and valleys. A book on the uses of cement purchased from Montgomery Ward had a picture in it of a middle-aged man on his knees with trowels in his hands levelling out cement. I adopted that pose, but with all the reverence I could command in myself and others, we could not get that floor even. Finally it was dark and we had to light lanterns. Those lanterns showed up those hills and valleys worse than before. We worked into the evening until, at last, those hills diminished and we were satisfied that the floor would do. Don't ask me to explain how it is possible, but that cement floor is one of the best we have ever put down!

The days which followed were harrowing ones. I came gradually to know how to smooth out cement. But my helpers remained as much at sea as ever. We did another small room, then the bedrooms. We chose first the out-of-the-way rooms, so that our mistakes would not be seen by everyone!

Finally the day came when we were to begin the large living-dining room floor. That was three times larger than any room we had done before. Very carefully we divided it into three parts. I told myself that we would do one part a day and finish in three days. But that floor took five days ! At six o'clock each morning we began our work. Often at eight-thirty at night we were still on our knees, smoothing out those blessed hills and valleys. I myself had gained some skill in smoothing them out, but my men could make more hills than I could repair. I am sure that the poor men often did not know what I was talking about, for what to them seemed remarkably smooth did not satisfy me at all. How I longed for a mason who could take charge and who could really do the work! To this day I have had none. I have had mason's helpers, but I found that they could not take the responsibility and often went ahead with something about which they knew nothing with the result that time and materials were wasted.

Since those first days, three small houses, all of cement, have been completed. Two more are on the way to completion. Each building has its interesting experiences which will never be forgotten by the builder. The putting on of a roof was another difficult task. To some of you it may be no task at all, but to me it was doing the impossible. I am sure that had I not had the expert advice of Ernest Atkins, our mission builder at Kikongo, I could never have accomplished what I have. He has made door and window frames, doors and shutters for the buildings here. He has come now and then for several days to help me with some impossibility. He has been patient with me when I made mistakes, though I know that some of the bungling work I have done must have hurt his sense of exactness. Above all, I have valued his advice. It has always helped me.

As I look over the few completed buildings, I do it with a sense of satisfaction. The two little buildings in which Miss Shepard lives are now adorned with morning glories growing over their walls. An attractive hedge surrounds them. The beginning of a fine lawn lends beauty to the houses. Miss Shepard has put on the finishing touches. It is the artist's touch. The houses are good. I feel that they will last.

One of the newer and more recent achievements is now history, the installation of a hydraulic ram. Memory only remains of the difficulty of damming a powerful stream of water. The spring yields fifty gallons of water in three and one-half seconds. When we first discovered it, it bubbled up from beneath a mountainous ledge, flowed on a slight incline down a rock-walled gulch for some thirty feet, then dropped precipitously to a larger stream-bed below and from there went merrily on its way. My task was to throw a dam across the gulch at about thirty feet from the spring head. To accomplish the purpose desired and to be sufficiently strong, this dam had to be some five and a half feet high, twenty feet long and sixteen inches wide. How to do this was a problem to me and I went many times just to look at the stream and to study ways of accomplishing the task. Good friends gave me suggestions. One day Lewis Brown and Don Niles came and helped me begin digging the foundation. This had to be chipped out of solid rock. They returned to Kikongo the next day, but the task was begun and we

did not leave it until it was done. With the use of sand-bags, persistance and determination we detoured the stream sufficiently to run the first cement. The water, of course, did not want to stay in the new and higher stream-bed improvised for it. Often it came seeping through to threaten the green cement. But we had no accidents and the dam was finished in as little time as an inexperienced man with less experienced help could do. Those days down in the shade of the deep forest were not unenjoyable to me. The only unpleasant part of it was working in water from morning until evening. Having no rubber boots, I turned my pant-legs up to above my knees and worked barefooted. Along toward the latter days of the work my limbs began to stiffen and ache until sleep was impossible at night. But that is all memory now and I believe that we have a good dam.

The next step was installation of the ram itself. More days spent in laying of water pipe, using pipe wrenches and such rare named articles as tees, reducers, elbows and couplings. Another day for putting in of a cement foundation for the ram and the stage was all set for the installation. A five hundred gallon tank was placed at the upper end of the water pipe to catch the water. The large four-inch pipes which connect the ram with the reservoir above were screwed together, and everything was ready. I pushed the lever and the ram began to pump. Would it actually push the water up, up, two hundred and nineteen feet to the tank? I sent a man up to see. He went and I waited. He did not come back. I sent a second to see whether the water was arriving at the tank or not. He went and I waited. He did not come back. I began to wonder what was happening at the other end. I sent my third and last man up to see whether or not the water was arriving. He went and I waited. He did not come back. Now, it is really an exertion to climb that hill and the average man would not want to do it more than two or three times a day. I had done it twice already, and I knew that if I went there I would have to come back again, but I was left alone. Fortunately just when I was in desperation, Helen sent down a boy with a lemonade. You know lemonade can cool one down in many ways! I tried again. I said to the boy in no uncertain words, "Now you go up to the tank and see whether or not the water is arriving there, and you come back here quickly

and tell me." He went—and came back. The water had not arrived at the other end. My three men were waiting for it to arrive! A few adjustments after that and a good stream was flowing into the tank. Appearances would indicate that we shall always have plenty of good water in our Boko homes. The Native people are happy. Previously, eight of them were detailed each day to carry water up that long steep climb to the missionaries' homes. That hard task, we hope, will not have to be done again.

We are now building a tower, a building of ten feet by twenty. It is being so constructed that there will be a good-sized storeroom on the ground floor. The cement pillars are well reinforced with iron and the walls are up. Next week I shall begin to put in the ceiling on which the tanks will rest. I am still having many difficulties, but I believe that they are very gradually becoming less as my men understand more how to use civilization's materials and tools.

But why all this building? Why do we have to go through with these difficult experiences? I earnestly wish it were not necessary. But we are in a country where the government requires the housing of all its personnel. Unless we house our teachers we cannot have teachers. Unless we can house our assistant male nurse, we cannot have a nurse. Unless we can house our pastor, we cannot have a pastor. Thousands of francs have been paid in fines by employers not providing adequate housing for the employed.

We must build because we need the houses for our teachers, evangelists, some key workmen, medical staff, etc. We need these people, for without them we cannot hope to do what our Lord expects us to do when he says to our hearts, "Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE WORLD." We still have a great task ahead of us here in Congo. In the first hundreds of miles nearest to Boko, few are evangelized and I believe that considerably more than half the population have never known the name of Christ. If we believe that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, then we have a stewardship which we cannot evade. We must carry the message of salvation to these needy people. The building of a mission station is the establishing of a bridgehead in the land of the enemy. We must "carry on" and build for Christ against the forces of darkness!

THE HOUSE OF BLOCKS

EVA SHEPARD

THE village people were very interested and curious when Bill started to build the little cement block house. They would stand and watch and ask questions. Who was going to live in the house? How large would it be? What held the blocks together without sticks or heavy vines to tie them in place? Would you be cold if you slept in it? Slowly but surely the walls went up. The roof had to wait a bit until Bill was free to supervise minutely and place the rafters and then the aluminum sheeting. One day, the last of October, it was finished.

The people came in crowds to watch us carry in bed, table, chairs and trunks. The glass windows were the most intriguing. They would stand in front of them and look at themselves and at their friends. Even now school boys come and want to comb their hair and primp in front of the windows. One evening we invited the men folk to come and have refreshments, one afternoon the women folk came for games and refreshments. They thoroughly enjoyed the sardine sandwiches, cookies and tea. The women stacked up matches one by one and waited to see who would be the one to make the stack fall. When it did fall such shrieks of delight. Laughing together cements friendships and heals so many misunderstandings due to language and different customs.

Because the house was small a second one was built nearby. That is used for kitchen and storeroom. Little by little improvements have been made to the house. As a Christmas gift to the house Mr. Atkins built a lovely built-in cupboard for dishes. It makes the house seem very modern and finished. Belgian friends call it "*La maison d'une poupée*" — a doll house, for it is small but very cozy. Climbing vines, morning glories, zinneas, and most of all the green grass have prettied it up and made it gay in contrast to the rather drab and sandy surroundings.

The latest contribution is the "water that comes out of a pipe." What comfort to be able to use all the water we wish. When men carried it on their shoulders we tried to be careful. The next Saturday after the ram was installed we had a big market. Villagers

came in to sell their manioc and corn but also to see this new sight. What a mystery. Only witchcraft would make water go up hill with out feet to carry it. One group was duly escorted to the big tank and watched the water being pumped into it there. More amazement and "Oh's and Ah's." Another group came to the house to see with their own eyes this miracle of water coming from a pipe. A car and an airplane are ordinary things, nothing amazing about them but this water from a pipe, that really was puzzling. It was a joy to talk with them and hear their naive remarks and see their faces as they saw the water flow from the pipe. They all had drinks and the little ones had a shower bath. No sooner had they gone but another group came to see this new sight and sample the water to make sure it was water. It was better than a circus. Eyes were big and gay peals of laughter were heard on all sides. It was a day to be happy.

Thus the new house has gradually become a home. We pray that the Lord will bless all those who had a share in building this home, those in the States and those here at Boko. May His blessing rest upon this house that those who come to it may find blessing and help and be drawn into a closer fellowship with our Saviour and Friend.

THE HOUSE OF BOOKS EXPANDS

EVA SHEPARD

FROM the beginning of the school, teachers, village folk and school boys often asked "What about the girls, when will they come to school?" When in June 1950 Miss Shepard was appointed to come to Boko they felt that their prayers had been answered. Now we will have a school for girls. We had to say "Sorry, but it takes more than one lady missionary to have a school." First we must have dormitories for the girls, then a kitchen and most important a faithful Christian man and Christian woman to teach and supervise these "cherubs."

When the village teachers were here for institute in August they carried big sticks and grass for the girls'dormitory. We waited, thinking and praying to know who should be chosen as guardian

and teacher. After long weeks of waiting Bill suggested one day that we ask the pastor here at Boko. He seemed to be just the one, we all agreed. As soon as we decided that, the school boys were sent to build the dormitory and kitchen. In three weeks it was ready.

We invited twenty-four girls to come to school. That seemed like a nice number until the pastor and his wife were able to get the few trained and happy.

The big day arrived January 21. First two little girls came in from a church center two days away. The littlest one started in crying and never did stop until she fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. When the pastor returned to her village, she went with him. Others kept coming until we had twelve. Our whole station was full of joy. When the girls walked into chapel the next morning row after row of eyes turned and stared at them. The boys were thrilled that they had come. The girls'classes in the afternoon were duly inspected by every adult and every lad that could find some sort of an excuse. Sewing class at four o'clock was well inspected. Never had the boys and teachers been so excited. Not even at Christmas. To think that 12 girls would get this reaction! What would a larger group have caused?

There is often a thorn. It arrived. The next evening I was called to the dormitory. Futila had chicken pox. She was the only girl from her district. No need to isolate her. The girls were doing it the cruelest way, just shunning her. Could we ask this one girl to sleep all alone at the hospital or in another house? We said"NO." We placed her in a bed in an isolated part of the room. Then we had a circle of prayer. It was a wonderful lesson showing the difference between village teaching, making the girls be mean and unkind to a stranger and a sick person, and the way Jesus would have them do, be kind to strangers and helpful to the ill ones. One-half hour's teaching of what Jesus would have them do, in contrast to the ten or fifteen years of village teaching had no immediate results. Village teaching was acted upon, they continued to snub her.

In three or four days the chicken pox was gone, but homesickness replaced it. One morning she ran off to go back to her village. The girls and the teacher followed all yelling and yelling (any

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thing for excitement). Then the boys wanted to get in on the fun. She received a great deal of attention. Two days later she tried it again. This time only the teacher followed her and he was mad. One morning she just wasn't to be found. A day or so later someone told us that people from her village had come by and taken her home.

Sewing class is the most effective bribe and also the suppression of it the most effective punishment. How they love it and most of them learn very quickly. In two months they have finished a small sampler and a baby garment. Now we are cutting out and sewing small sunsuits. All of the sewing materials are from White Cross. We surely do appreciate them. Many thanks. While they sew we sing and talk. It is an opportunity to become acquainted with the girls. It is only three hours a week but it keeps the girls happy, and gives them knowledge that they can use all their life.

Since the girls are with us the whole 24 hours we have a wonderful opportunity to teach not only the three "R's" which are a very necessary foundation but also the practice of Christian living in the dormitory and at work. We long that these lovable and lovely girls may want their home to be Christian and that they should know how to build a Christian home. If the wife and mother really loves Christ and tries sincerely to live like Christ, her children will learn to love Christ and will be taught His ways. Her house will become a Christian Home.

Our vision, our prayer, our urgent desire is that we may have a larger and larger enrollment until it equals or surpasses the number in our boys' school. Without Christian wives there can be no Christian homes.

A BUILDING NOT MADE WITH HANDS

W. F. Robbins

THAT which we call the Kingdom of God, that great heavenly building constructed out of the great loving Heart of the Living God, and which finds resting room in our hearts — that Building is one which can never be adequately described. If we describe that which we have in the homeland, we describe something

beautiful, but we know it is only a part. If we describe that part of the building which we find in some hidden corner of Africa, beautiful and strange though it may be, we realize that we have seen only a part.

The foundations of that portion of that great spiritual building which exists here among the Bayaka tribe, others have built. The brave soldiers of the Cross, who in those earlier days passed over these mountains, across these plains and down through these deep forested, stream-filled valleys, have never told all of the hardships, the weary marches, and the longings which were theirs. Many of the heroic deeds of these brave men and women come to light as we follow in their footsteps. Many others will always be hidden from you and me. Only in the great "afterwhile," when we see Him face to face shall many of these things be known, and I know that we shall rejoice that they had the power to be such able warriors and that they could so glorify their Lord. I have the desire to name over these courageous souls who did that great work of foundation-laying. Yet, I shall not do so, lest I commit the grave error of leaving some name out. Suffice it to say that among the first are the names of Tata Moody and Tata MacDiarmid and among the latter are Tata and Mama Armstrong, and Tata and Mama Smith.

Added to these we must remember those noble souls who started down the Christian pathway those early days and who have been staunch and loyal followers of Christ to the present day. On New Year's Eve, when several hundred of our people were gathered together, we honored eleven of these brave men. You would not have been impressed had you seen them. Poorly dressed, wearing no shoes, thin of body and face, they did not present an air of greatness or nobleness. Yet we repeat: they are noble. Long difficult years they had waited for the coming of the Mission at Boko and for greater help to spread the Gospel Message. Twenty years is a long time in anyone's life; and these had, during all those twenty years, withstood the pressure of fetishism and heathenism all about them. They had had to turn their backs on age-long customs. They had had to stand against father and mother and sister and brother and relatives, and they had succeeded in continuing to be faithful followers of Christ. Yes, they are

noble, and it was a joy to me and my fellow missionaries to have the honor to stand with them in their testimony of loyalty to Christ.

They have not learned to take responsibility as we take responsibility. They are not used to shouldering heavy spiritual burdens for the sake of others. But they have been faithful—they are the foundations of the Bayaka Church.

When we arrived in the Boko field, there were six outstations: Dinga, Mutomdo Yamfu, Malambu, Zikomba, Kisiene and Kasongo Yungu. At that time there were three pastors and three itinerating evangelists or preacher-deacons. Today, we have one pastor and five evangelists. One pastor left to render his service in the Léopoldville church and school. Another has preferred teaching to preaching and is now in charge of a regional school for the training of boys for Christian work. The third is still with us as pastor. His post has various indications of life and the future of this post looks brighter than it has in many years. A nicely built thatch church is nearing completion and a thriving school for boys in training for Christian service is bearing a great testimony to all the villages nearby.

When we arrived here there were five regional schools. Today we have seven such schools, and it is gratifying to us that some of the leaders of these schools have been able to raise the standards appreciably.

But the above is simply a skeleton or structure. To you it may be uninteresting, and you are right. But when we fill in these structural spaces with large Spirit-moved meetings and consecrated personalities and individualities, then the great Spiritual Building becomes beautiful.

It was beautiful to me when, a few months ago, I visited the outstation of Kisiene and on Sunday morning stood to preach before a great eager assembly of over a thousand people. When, after the service, dozens of young people came forward with gifts to claim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, I rejoiced. I am sure that you, too, rejoice with me. Surely, these are stirrings of the Spirit.

I was gladdened when, two weeks ago at our outpost of Kasongo Yungu, a young teacher presented his school boys and girls with justifiable pride, because every one of them had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

I was happy when, a month ago, one of our newer and younger teacher evangelists was able to report that within a month he had accomplished what is almost unheard of among the Bayakas. He and the people of the village had built a fine thatch house for their teacher and also a chapel.

Gladness fills my heart that within the last three months the enrollment of two of our regional schools has grown so large that it has become impossible for only one man to handle the school.

It was gratifying, very gratifying, when yesterday I found at our post of Dinga several women of certainly more than thirty years of age, who had recently learned to read. The Congo women in these parts are nearly one hundred percent illiterate. So you can understand what a joy it brings to know of some who have so far surrendered themselves to Christ that they begin to desire to read more about Him. One is quite sure when this happens that the clear spring of Eternal Water has begun to enter their souls, and that they are beginning to receive that happiness which comes from fellowship with Christ.

It also gladdened and saddened my heart when seventeen young people came forward with their gifts to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. I was glad because the Holy Spirit had been working in their hearts and had brought them to the decision that they wished to leave the old life and to live their lives in Christ. That is such a long step for us all to take, that when finally someone has had the courage to take it one cannot help but praise the Heavenly Father. However, I was saddened, too. As I looked on those glowing young faces, my heart echoed the words that the pastor, only a few minutes earlier, had expressed, "Ah, but Tata, they have no leadership. They are sheep without a shepherd. The teacher-evangelist who was in that village has long since gone away. They are without anyone to help them to know the Way."

You will bear with me, I hope, if we face this condition frankly. When a thing is actually a fact, it seems to me it is wrong to "poo-poo" what is said about it, and to make light of realities. Our village evangelists, for the most part, are not stable. This is natural to the Bayakas. It is often said that a Muyaka cannot be expected to stay at any one job for more than six months at a time. Being a

race of hunters and, by nature, a roving people, it is difficult for them to settle down to anything permanent.

When, by nature, people are as unstable as the Bayakas, you can guess the resultant effects on the church. The teacher-evangelists are of the same race. Many of them will do excellent work for some months and then, for no real reason at all, they are gone. Awakened people drift back into their old ways and fetishes. To them these seem more trustworthy and reliable.

But let us look further. I hope you will bear with me and that you will be sympathetic. The evangelist or colored pastor who oversees the work of a number of villages is also unstable. If he is not continually supervised by the missionary, he will not complete his work. He is a good man with a small vision. He desires to do right, but has never had the long range vision of full surrender to Christ and His program for all time. Had we more of these evangelists and pastors and were they really qualified in His Spirit, I feel sure that the whole Boko story might be different, and that here there would arise a mighty awakening, such as has rarely been experienced in other parts of our mission.

Will you go with me a step further and, please, be sympathetic, please! Why is the whole leadership of the Bayakas in this condition? I can answer only a part of that question and, please, I would like to answer that frankly and to say what I believe to be true. Here is the answer. We have never been supplied with the missionary staff sufficient to do this work. The work here was first directed from Sona Bata, hundreds of miles away. Then it was directed from Kikongo, which is still over a hundred miles away. Naturally the Kikongo and Sona Bata missionaries could not spend sufficient time here to build a really matured work. Now there are three of us here. I am sure that Miss Shepard would say that she could not do an ounce more than she is doing. Helen and I find we cannot live a normal life, because each day's work keeps us busy way into the night hours. We do not have time for recreation, and we do not have time with our children. We do not complain about that. We are glad to serve. Were it possible to do more, we would do it. But what hurts is, that in spite of all our efforts, we are not making the progress we should. And we do not progress because we leave so many things undone. It is these

undone things which hurt us and the Congo people with whom we work.

Right now the district needs a full-time man to put his efforts for some years in purely evangelistic work. How I'd like to do that. I am trained for it. I enjoy it. It is part of me. But, at the very best of my ability and strength, I can give two, or at most three days a week to that work. And I speak of a seven day week with no Saturdays off! I cannot be in the district long because there is a large boys' school here on the station which, I feel sure, both Miss Shepard and Mrs. Robbins would say, is too new and immature for the discipline to be handled entirely by women. The boys who are in this school are to be our future pastors and evangelists. Our hope is in them. We must have the school.

Added to this there is the building of the station. We have our own semi-permanent home. No one built it for us. We had to build it ourselves with what help the colored people could give. We have two little personnel buildings, which are at present occupied by Miss Shepard. These are of permanent materials. These were not built for us and, in these, I had to do the larger share of the building, for the colored people here have never before had anything to do with building materials such as we use in our civilization. We have no qualified workmen. We have our dispensary in permanent materials, as well as another nearly finished personnel house, a water tower, food store, etc. No one built these for us. We have had to do it. Then there are some two dozen temporary buildings on the station, such as classrooms, church, house for colored nurse, pastor, school teachers and others of the important workmen. No one built these for us. We had to do it. I have said nothing about Catholic activities, which make our work even more difficult. Much more could be said, but this is enough. I have not spoken in the spirit of complaint or discouragement. I do have some questions which I wish might be considered. How can one man do good work, when there are so many tasks to which he must give his time? How can a sturdy spiritual structure be built in the short time in which we should build it with so little personnel to man the tasks at hand? Is not the lack of sufficient staff from the homeland one of the larger factors which is retarding the evangelizing of the people here? I firmly believe that it is.

But we shall, through firm faith in Christ and the power of His Gospel, achieve His purpose, nevertheless. It may and probably will take longer. Our friends must try to understand some of the reasons for our slow growth, and there are more than I have mentioned above.

The above shows the condition of the "Building Not Made With Hands" here at Boko. It is by no means a discouraging picture. There are some great needs. It is far from finished. The foundations are barely in, and it is certain that more foundation work will have to be done or the future walls of this Spiritual building will buckle and fall. If we must build slowly, may we honor our Heavenly Father by building well. It is our prayer here at Boko, that, in all and with all our strength, we may glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

STATION NEWS NOTES

BANZA MANTEKE — Dr. Freas has been making periodic visits to the cement factory at Lukala. This provides a valuable opportunity for Christian service in this important commercial center. Annis Ford has spent a good deal of her time since her arrival in traveling to the 14 regional schools in the Banza Manteke field. Most of these schools can be reached by round-about automobile roads, but to six of them one must walk, or at best use a bicycle.

The Banza Manteke station is rapidly growing with the addition of much needed buildings. With the invaluable help of skilled and willing native masons and carpenters, and under the direction of Phil Uhlinger, the main building of the *Ecole Ménagère* is nearing completion. The foundation for the new missionary residence is being laid, and work is to start in a few months on the *Ecole Sécondaire* and the five remaining buildings of the *Ecole Ménagère* project.

An enjoyable aspect of station life has been the monthly game nights for the native staff and their families held in the missionary homes. In spite of overcrowding, and the presence of numerous babies, everybody seems to have a good time playing parlor games of African-American origin.

On decision Sunday, following an invitation for those who wanted to follow Christ, there were 146 boys and girls who came forward. They are now enrolled in pre-baptism classes, and are soon to be baptized if successful in an examination to determine Christian knowledge and character.

LEOPOLDVILLE — Two large class rooms, which have been needed for a long time, have been arranged at the two ends of our manual training building. Our church in the Native center is being redecorated. — We now have three Bible women doing home to home and hospital visitation.

KIKONGO — New life has come to our station — Bernice and Don Niles have joined us, brought us much joy; the Smith's house is finished; the Brown's house renovated and the foundation laid for the church. — First classroom unity with book-room and stock-room, of *Institut Biblique* is completed and in use since February. Five cement-block houses for students and teachers have been built.

VANGA — The Vanga staff has had the experience of the "10 little, 9 little — 1 little Indian." In 1927 we were ten missionaries, now we are three. We are thankful for well trained teachers, evangelists, pastors and hospital assistants, but they still need the supervision of missionaries. Their problems are many that they bring to us daily. Mr. and Mrs. Jump will be returning from Belgium in September, and we hope for a couple for evangelistic work. You at home can have a large share in lifting the load by your prayers and giving. — L. M. Osterholm.

Comings and Goings — Dr. and Mrs. Walker and little John Wade arrived from Belgium; not only does Sona Bata rejoice in their coming, but the whole Congo Mission gives them a warm welcome. — Agnes Anderson and Emily Satterberg left Matadi for the States May 21st — Mary Bonar, and Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Boone sailed for America June 15th.

Our Latest Addition — Philip Douglas Uhlinger, Jr. arrived at the home of Rose and Phil Uhlinger, April 29th. We are happy you joined us "Little Phil" to add sunshine to our Congo family circle.

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

BANZA MANTEKE
via Matadi
Miss Esther Ehnbom, R.N.
Miss Annis Ford
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas
Rev. and Mrs. Philip Uhlinger

BOKO
via Popokabaka et Inkisi
Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins
Miss Eva Shepard

KIKONGO *sur Wamba*
via Banningville
Rev. E. and G. Atkins
Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. Donald Niles
Miss Dorothy Wiseman, R.N.

E.P.I. KIMPESE
via Matadi
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson
Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall

LEOPOLDVILLE II
Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Armstrong
Rev. Phyllis Benner
Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Watkins

MOANZA *sur Inzia,*
via Masi-Manimba
Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Miss Alice Jorgenson, R.N.

SONA BATA
via Matadi
Miss Vendla Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. R. G. Metzg
Dr. G. W. Tuttle
Dr. and Mrs. John W. Walke

VANGA *sur Kwilu,*
via Banningville
Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Osterholm
Miss Doris Wiseman

LECO, CONGO BOOK SHOP
B. P. 123 Léo-Est
Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Carpent

ON FURLOUGH

Miss Agnes Anderson, R.N.
Miss Mary Bonar
Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Boone
Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown
Rev. and Mrs. T. E. Bubeck
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall
Miss Jean Luckey
Miss Emily Satterberg, R.N
Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith
Mrs. G. W. Tuttle

STUDY IN BELGIUM

Miss Helen Gaskill
Miss Emily Keyes
Rev. and Mrs. C. J. Jump
Dr. Carrie Sprague
Rev. and Mrs. Edward V. Wrig

* *Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpes*